

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1136

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Transportation, March 31, 2011

Title: An act relating to volunteer firefighter special license plates.

Brief Description: Creating volunteer firefighter special license plates.

Sponsors: House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Representatives Eddy, Armstrong, Morris, Kristiansen, Chandler, Pearson and Kenney).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/22/11, 94-0.

Committee Activity: Transportation: 3/31/11 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; White, Vice Chair; King, Ranking Minority Member; Fain, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Delvin, Eide, Ericksen, Hill, Hobbs, Litzow, Nelson, Prentice, Ranker, Sheldon, Shin and Swecker.

Staff: Katherine Taylor (786-7434)

Background: The Department of Licensing (DOL) issues special vehicle license plates that may be used in lieu of standard plates. A governmental or nonprofit sponsoring organization seeking to sponsor a special plate either submits an application to DOL or requests legislation to create the special plate.

Generally, the sponsoring organization seeking to sponsor the special plate is required to reimburse DOL for the costs of establishing the new special plate. For special license plates that are enacted by the Legislature, a sponsoring organization must, within 30 days of enactment, submit prepayment of all start-up costs to the DOL. If the sponsoring organization is not able to meet the prepayment requirement, revenues generated from the sale of the special license plate are first used to pay off any costs associated with establishing the new plate. The sponsoring organization must also provide a proposed license plate design to the DOL and submit an annual financial report to DOL detailing actual revenues generated from the sale of the special license plate.

There is a moratorium on the issuance of new special license plates until June 30, 2011.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Summary of Bill: The bill as referred to committee not considered.

Summary of Bill (Recommended Amendments): The act creates the volunteer firefighter special license plate, which depicts a symbol, description, or artwork that recognizes volunteer firefighters. In addition to all fees and taxes required to be paid upon application for a vehicle registration, a fee of \$40 is charged for a volunteer firefighter special license plate and a \$30 renewal fee is charged for renewal of a volunteer firefighter special license plate. The funds collected may be used for purposes on behalf of volunteer firefighters, their families, and others deemed in need.

An applicant for the initial volunteer firefighter special license plate must have been a volunteer firefighter for at least ten years or be a volunteer firefighter for at least one year and must have documentation of service from the appropriate fire service district. The volunteer firefighter special license plate must be surrendered if the volunteer firefighter leaves firefighting between two and ten years after the plate is issued. If the volunteer firefighter stays in service for at least ten years and then leaves, the license plate may be retained by the former volunteer firefighter, and if retained for use, the person will continue to pay the future registration renewals. A qualifying firefighter may have no more than one set of plates per vehicle for each of his or her vehicles and, if the volunteer firefighter is convicted of a felony, the license plate must be surrendered upon conviction.

Reports regarding special license plates are submitted by DOL to the Joint Transportation Committee.

Volunteer firefighter license plates are exempt from the temporary moratorium on special license plates.

EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (Recommended Amendments as Passed Committee): Clarifies that a volunteer firefighter must serve as a volunteer firefighter at least ten years in order to retain volunteer firefighter special plates after retirement from service.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

[OFM requested ten-year cost projection pursuant to I-960.]

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on January 1, 2012.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Proposed Amendments as Heard in Committee:

PRO: Over 70 percent of firefighters in Washington are volunteers. Volunteer firefighters want these special plates, and thousands of signatures have been collected in support of these special license plates. The money raised from the special plates will allow the volunteer firefighters to help people in need; the special plates would allow the public to recognize volunteer firefighters, and over 40 states have some form of special license plates for volunteer firefighters.

Persons Testifying: PRO: T.J. Nedrow, Andrew Shaffran, Washington State Firefighters; Ryan Spiller, Washington Fire Commissioners.